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Health Department of Northwest Michigan

Toys for Tots: Join HDNW in Collecting Gifts for Children
Boxes placed in four counties for drop-offs

Employees at the Health Department of Northwest Michigan (HDNW) are on a mission. They've determined to "stuff the bus" with toys for children as part of their all-staff meeting, and the public is invited to join the effort.

"The idea began when we donated space at our Gaylord office to [Toys for Tots](#) for their holiday toy drive," said Dan Thorell, HDNW Interim Health Officer. "Wanting to help families during this tough economic time—especially when tornado recovery is ongoing in Otsego County—has become a highlight for staff. It's added an element of fun to our annual meeting plans."

The "bus" is actually HDNW's mobile unit often spotted offering services throughout Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. As part of the all-staff meeting, employees will stuff the bus with unwrapped toys that will make their way into area homes and brighten children's faces and lives on Christmas morning.

"While we know the children will be excited, we also hope the parents will feel a sense of relief when they see the community come together and show love for their children," said Holly Campbell, HDNW Deputy Health Officer. "We have placed Toys for Tots boxes at our offices to make donations convenient for the public."

Toys for young children are easier to select. But because it can be difficult to buy for older children, 10 years and up, Northern Michigan Toys for Tots has provided HDNW with a list of preferred gifts for this age group:

- 26-inch bikes (cash donations will be compiled for larger items)
- Personal hygiene kits
- Wallets
- Costume jewelry (not too gawdy)
- Legos and Cocomelon
- Nerf guns
- Mega blocks
- Hairdryers, curling irons, and hair scrunchies
- Lotions and body wash

How can the public join in? As of Friday, Nov. 11, unwrapped gifts may be dropped into the Toys for Tots collection boxes at HDNW's Bellaire (209 Portage Dr.), Charlevoix (220 W. Garfield), Harbor

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. For more information, visit nwhealth.org.

Springs/Petoskey (3434 M-119, Ste A, Harbor Springs), and Gaylord (95 Livingston Blvd.) offices. Donations should be made by noon, Wednesday, Nov. 30.

After two years of not gathering, the all-staff meeting is resuming to offer agency-wide updates and training.

Cutline: The Health Department of Northwest Michigan's mobile unit will turn into a high-tech sleigh as it collects and transports gifts to Toys for Tots, a Marine Corps Reserve program.

